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Ray, George W.

(Speech)

Annexation of Hawaii

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Annexation of Hawaii.

SPEECH

OF

HON. GEORGE W. RAY,

OF NEW YORK,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Saturday, June 11, 1858.

On the joint resolution (H. Res. 239) to provide for annexing the Hawaiian Islands to the United States.

Mr. RAY of New York said:

MR. SPEAKER: The question of the annexation of Hawaii has agitated the public mind and engaged, to some extent, the attention of the Congress of the United States for about three years. For the first time the question is before the House of Representatives for direct action. Since the proposition was first presented as a public one and came seriously before the Executive, conditions have changed, and to-day we face the proposition of annexation under circumstances that demand immediate action the one way or the other and a settlement of the policy of this Government toward those islands and the Government thereof.

Twenty-five hundred miles to the westward of San Francisco we find the first islands of consequence or of value. More than 3,960 miles farther to the west we reach the shores of Japan, China, and the possessions of Great Britain in the far East. By the same route and at a still greater distance we reach the Philippine Islands, until recently possessed and held by Spain, now held by the United States and soon to be permanently held and occupied by this nation. We are at war with the Kingdom of Spain. The primary object of this contest was not the subjugation of Spain or of any of her possessions or the acquisition of any territory whether belonging to Spain or any other government. The primary object was to free the people of Cuba and give to them a stable government. This object has not been lost sight of and will be attained. The mode and manner of doing this must of necessity be left to the Executive.

Spain must be brought to terms, compelled to release her hold on Cuba; and if in compelling this we find it necessary to compel her to release her control of Puerto Rico and the Philippines, she must submit. Having gone to war, she must submit to and accept the fortunes of war. The United States must assume all the cares and responsibilities while she enjoys the benefits of victory. At the very commencement of hostilities it became apparent that the struggle was to be a long and bitter one. Those who stated that the Spaniards are cowardly and would run away or surrender at the sound of the first angry gun, that ninety days would see the

end of the war, that a protest would be made, and that then our demands for the evacuation of Cuba would be complied with, find that they were mistaken.

It had become apparent to thinking men, at the very outbreak of hostilities, that the real and decisive campaigns must be fought not on the sea. Cuba is a hundred miles over the water, and our only way of reaching her is by means of ships and transports. Were a Spanish navy roaming Cuban waters it would be foolhardy in the extreme to send transports loaded with troops out into these waters. They might gain their destination unnoticed and unharmed, but the probabilities are that thousands of lives would be lost in such an undertaking. If therefore we came and were necessary to destroy or drive from the ocean the navy of Spain.

It would not do to permit a Spanish fleet of war ships to float at will in any quarter of the world, and hence it was that a wise policy sent the brave and able Dewey to Manila with orders to destroy or capture the Spanish war vessels at that point. He performed his duty bravely, heroically, and promptly. Without further orders he steamed boldly into the harbor at Manila and sunk the Spanish fleet. This done, but two courses remained; one was to steam away home and leave the islands in the possession of Spain; the other and the sensible one was to remain, reduce the islands themselves and subject them to the domination of this nation.

The latter course was wisely pursued, and so the forts were reduced and the Stars and Stripes, emblem of liberty and good government, were raised above that subjugated and conquered territory. To hold these islands, to give them a proper and stable government, it is necessary to send an army and munitions of war, and this army must be supplied and safe communication maintained with the home Government. To do this our ships must traverse more than 5,000 miles of ocean. Steamships, and war ships, and monitors, and transports can make such a journey if properly watered, provisioned, and coaled and no accident occurs and no attack is made upon them. But the distance is too great to be undertaken without a stop; without recoalng, a fresh supply of water, provisions, and coal, and hence the attention of the Executive and of the whole country was directed to the Island of Hawaii.

Hawaii is friendly, but she must observe the law of nations or incur the danger of an attack by Spain and possibly other nations. For three years or more her intelligent and governing people have been seeking annexation to the United States. For more than three years the propriety and advisability of such annexation has been discussed by the American people, and the proposition has grown in favor as the months have gone by. There has been no thirst for conquest, no desire or inclination to enter upon a policy of colonization, no purpose to enlarge our territory for the sake of territorial expansion; but we have seen the covetous eyes of other nations fixed on those islands, and we have seen the trade we ought to control passing into other hands.

We are rapidly coming to understand that if we would have our share of the rapidly growing trade with India, China, and Japan we must build up and maintain a shipping to carry across the ocean our manufactures and bring home the products of those countries. To establish this trade and maintain it, a harbor under the protection of our guns and of our flag is necessary. The har-

bor of Hawaii is the only one that will answer the purpose, and our people have come to see that while the offer is open it is our duty as a nation to accept the proffered gift and make Pearl Harbor our own.

This we can not do without taking the island, and we can not take the island without taking the people. It is unfortunately true that many of the people who inhabit this island are not desirable as citizens, and it is also unfortunately true that in every State of this Union we have many people who are not desirable as citizens or as neighbors. But, Mr. Speaker, this is not a good reason for rejecting the opportunity to gain Pearl Harbor as a permanent and a safe refuge for our ships of commerce that will dot the Pacific when peace is secured and during the pending contest, and as a safe coaling and repair station for our transports and war and supply ships during the war with Spain, and for all time.

Mr. Speaker, from a commercial and business standpoint the annexation of Hawaii is both wise and expedient, and on military considerations such annexation is now an absolute necessity. Our transports and merchantmen must constantly traverse the waters of the Pacific, carrying thousands of precious lives and millions in value of goods and supplies. It will not do, sir, to undertake to send these ships unattended. It will not do to send them on this voyage of nearly 6,000 miles without a friendly harbor into which they may drop, safely anchor, repair, and recoil.

Hawaii was placed where she is for the use of this free people in extending the blessings of liberty and a good government to the islands and peoples on the opposite side of the globe, and God has so shaped events that the people of Hawaii are open to give and the hearts of the people of these United States are open to receive at the very time that the gift of the island is necessary and most acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I shall not stop to discuss at any length the question of the constitutionality of the proposed annexation or the difficulties we may have to contend with in properly governing Hawaii and the Philippine Islands. The people of these United States have found no particular difficulty in maintaining good government at home for one hundred and twenty years and preserving our country undivided. We are capable of extending the blessings and benefits of a popular free government to the peoples of other nations, and especially to the inhabitants of the little islands of the seas.

Already Hawaii is governed and controlled by men of American birth, men who are in sympathy with the Government of the United States, men who love our institutions, our customs, our manners, and our flag. A good Government similar to our own has already been established in that island, and while we would not seek for years to come and possibly never to admit her into the Union as a free and sovereign State, still all must admit that there will be no difficulty whatever in maintaining good order on that island under the form of a Territorial government.

There is no necessity now for discussing the problem of governing the Philippines. Within the next six months they may be lost to us, or when peace is made they may be surrendered, but I venture the assertion that should they become permanently attached to the United States, as I trust and have no doubt they will be, we shall have no serious difficulty in maintaining a Terri-

torial government for that people under the beneficent influences of which they will rapidly improve in education, religion, the arts, and sciences, and eventually become prosperous, intelligent, and happy.

Mr. Speaker, the world is progressing, the people are improving, intelligence is being disseminated, and the time will come when ignorance, barbarism, and despotism will pass away. It is the mission of the United States to elevate, educate, and ennoble in proper ways and at the proper time all the peoples of the earth. This will not be done by conquest except in rare instances, but still it is to be done, and the civilized nations of the earth will aid us in the doing and approve our action whenever it tends to the ennoblement and uplifting of the human race.

I do not share the fears of those gentlemen who predict that the nations of Europe will oppose our occupying either Hawaii or the Philippines. The rule of Spain is distasteful to the people of every liberty-loving nation on the face of the earth. England, Germany, France, and Russia would rather deal with the United States in solving the Eastern question than with the brutal and bigoted Government of the Kingdom of Spain.

Upon the constitutional question raised by some of our Democratic friends I will be equally brief. It seems strange to me that one hundred and twenty years after the Declaration of Independence any citizen of this Republic should doubt the authority of the United States to extend the blessings of liberty and the protection of our flag to any people asking to be taken beneath the broad and ample folds of the Star-Spangled Banner. Early in the history of this Government we took Florida by purchase from Spain and all that great territory west of the Mississippi by purchase from France; and if we have the constitutional right as a nation to purchase territory, it is difficult to understand why we can not take territory as a gift when the lawful owners tender it.

It strikes me forcibly that the gentlemen on the Democratic side who argued that we have no power to acquire territory either by purchase or gift would hardly concede that Florida and those magnificent States west of the Mississippi do not lawfully belong to the Government of the United States and are not entitled to the protection of its flag. Later on, when the people of Texas had substantially won their independence and had established a government of their own, crude and imperfect though it was, we extended the limits of the Union and took that broad and rich territory within the boundary lines of the Republic, and later on, when the war with Mexico had terminated, we expanded our territorial limits still further. It is late in the day, Mr. Speaker, for gentlemen to argue against the constitutionality of these proceedings.

When Hawaii is annexed, as she will be with the free consent of her people, they will be estopped from denying the constitutionality of the transaction, and I do not believe that any considerable number of the American people will question the constitutionality of the acts of Congress by which that territory is acquired.

As to the constitutionality of acquiring the Philippine Islands by conquest, I can hardly imagine an argument against such acquisition. Every nation on the face of the earth from earliest times has added to her territory in this way. The right to acquire territory by conquest is well recognized in the law of nations and is a right incident to the existence of nationality. It

requires no words written in the constitution of the nation to confer this right. It is incident to sovereignty. Can there be any question of the advisability of annexing Hawaii and the Philippines, if that shall be deemed proper by and by, and thereby adding millions upon millions to our national wealth and millions upon millions of dollars to our commerce?

Is there any necessity for building up and extending our commerce both at home and abroad? In 1789 our merchant marine was 201,000 tons. In 1810, owing to the Napoleonic wars, we had increased the tonnage of our merchant marine to 1,400,000 tons. In 1855 we built 600,000 tons of merchant marine. In 1861 we had 5,540,000 tons of merchant marine afloat, and this was of such a class that about 2,500,000 tons was registered for foreign trade. At that time we had one-third of the merchant marine of the world, England had one-third, and the rest of the world combined possessed the other third. This we had accomplished in half a century.

The war of the rebellion proved disastrous to our merchant marine, and we lost during that war from all causes 879,000 tons of shipping. In 1887 we did only $3\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of the world's internal navigation, while England did $50\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In 1836 American steamships made 164 voyages between the United States and Europe, while the steamships of other nations made 7,116 such voyages. To-day England has 13,600,000 tons of merchant marine, while we have 4,600,000 tons only, but little more than we had in 1861. Our population has doubled, while our need of a merchant marine is ten times as great. The combined mercantile marine of England and the United States is more than one-half of all that floats.

Mr. Speaker, when we consider the small amount of merchant marine owned and controlled by the United States of America, a nation of nearly 80,000,000 people, our vast resources and territory, our vast manufacturing interests, the necessities of our people, and the necessity and desirability of extending our trade and commerce to the nations of the Old World and the growing republics of the New World, is it not time that we do something not only to encourage shipbuilding but to give us the power and ability to make a safe voyage not only between New York and Liverpool but between San Francisco and Japan and San Francisco and Hongkong?

Is it not time that we reach out and take possession of those little islands in the sea that are offered to us as a gift, in order to afford a harbor of refuge to merchant vessels flying the American flag and to our war ships, whether in times of peace or in times of war? It is not the wealth of Hawaii that we covet; it is not the right or privilege of governing her people that we desire; it is not simply the products of her broad and fruitful fields that we covet. What we want is a safe harbor in the midst of the waters of the Pacific, where we may establish a coaling station and where we may repair ships and take refuge from the storm at all times and under all circumstances, with no one to molest or make us afraid. We shall have no difficulty in defending that island against invasion by any foreign nation. We can defend as easily as any nation can attack, and no one will deny that American pluck and bravery and energy and skill and resources will enable us to defend successfully every foot of soil above which we raise the American flag.

Mr. Speaker, we have started out to give liberty and a stable government to the people of Cuba. To be successful in this undertaking we must sweep the Spanish navies from the sea and take possession of the outlying islands far from her own shores or near our own belonging to that Kingdom and to which her war ships may resort for protection or for supplies. To this end Puerto Rico must fall and be annexed to the United States; Cuba must be placed under the protection of this Government; Spanish intolerance, oppression, and misrule must cease in the Western Hemisphere. And that we may accomplish these results successfully, our ships must be enabled to sail the oceans without hindrance. A war ship must carry men and guns and supplies and ammunition, and can not be overweighted with fuel. But to be of use when far away from home our war ships must have a coaling station somewhere within a reasonable distance and not be compelled to make a voyage of weeks to obtain a fresh supply of fuel.

Every consideration demands that Hawaii be annexed to the United States. Her people and her interests ask it, and our people and our interests demand it. There should be no hesitation at this time, no indulging in fears of what may occur as the years roll by. If the time comes when this Republic becomes too weak and puny to defend Hawaii against the aggressions of other nations and properly govern her people, it will be time for us to surrender, not only that territory, but all we now possess on the continent of North America. It will be time for us to go out of business as a nation.

Mr. Speaker, the people of all lands and of all climes have watched with growing interest the prosperity of this Republic of ours, and those who love liberty have flocked to our shores at all times during the last century. Such has been our example, our growth and development in all that makes a nation good and great and free, that now little Cuba has reached out her hand for help, and the cry has been heard and answered by every loyal, sympathetic heart in the United States. Hawaii, from amid the placid waves of the Pacific, has made her voice heard asking that she, weak as she is, be given the protection that only our Government and our flag can afford. Her request is to be heeded and answered in the affirmative, and when the Congress of the United States, in response to the wishes of the Executive, shall have responded to the request of Hawaii, it will have also responded to the voice and wishes of the people of the United States of America.

The sugar production of Hawaii will alone recompense this people for every dollar of expense incurred in caring for her. Her debt is so small as to be insignificant in comparison with the revenues to be derived from her trade and commerce. But, Mr. Speaker, it is not alone with an eye to profit that we advocate annexation. The safety and perpetuity of this Republic demand it. It is neither an ill-advised nor a mistaken policy. Those who opposed the acquisition of Florida, of the Louisiana purchase, of Texas, and of California came to see their mistake and regret their action. So it will be with those who now oppose and vote against the annexation of Hawaii.

Our commerce will grow, and merchantmen flying the flag of the United States of America will be seen in large numbers upon every sea and in every harbor of the world; new channels of trade will be opened up and new markets created for the productions of our shops and factories and fields. A new impetus will be given

our manufacturing industries, and added wealth and an increased opportunity for labor will add to the general prosperity.

We may as well hold Hawaii as a part of our territory, as a Territory of this Republic, as an integral part of our domain, as to undertake to act as her guardian or protector. So long as we undertake simply to protect her other nations may assume a like duty and insist that their right and duty in that regard is as great as our own and even superior. Thousands of Japanese have settled there, and who knows how soon that nation may assert a right to control the island? She may send war ships into Pearl Harbor any day, land an army, and defy the United States.

While we are bending our energies to bring Spain to terms, while our armies are on Cuban soil, and our war ships at the Philippines and in Cuban waters, the lust for territory may seize Japan and she may take possession of the island now offered us. And she could do this without making war upon the United States. But, Mr. Speaker, our flag once raised at Hawaii and a small body of the boys who wear the blue once quartered there, with the declaration that Hawaii is ours, and no nation on the face of the earth will dare interfere.

I am conscious of the fact that a thirst for territorial expansion has proved ruinous to many nations. I do not forget that Alexander wept because there were no more worlds to conquer, and that Greece is to-day one of the weakest and most powerless of all the nations. I remember that Rome sat upon her seven hills and from her throne of empire ruled the world, and that to-day she is almost powerless. I can see Napoleon Bonaparte conquering Egypt, winning a victory at the foot of Mount Tabor, rolling the defeated Turks back upon the Jordan, occupying Vienna, and carrying the eagles of France in triumph from Paris to Madrid and from Madrid to Moscow. I can see him, too, an exile at Elba, crushed at Waterloo, and ending his days at St. Helena, while Cossacks occupied the Tuileries and the nations reduced the territorial limits of France. All this I remember and fully appreciate, and it admonishes me and should admonish every good citizen who loves this land and desires the prosperity and perpetuity of our Government to act with caution and discretion and resist all temptation to undertake the unnecessary acquisition of territory.

But, sir, in what we propose to do there is no dream of universal empire—only a desire to protect our own interests and insure the prosperity of our people. Not sympathy for oppressed and outraged Cubans alone led us to declare for "free Cuba." Our own interests were involved. So to-day we are to consider this proposition from no sentimental standpoint, but as a plain business proposition, and accept or discard it as shall be deemed wisest and most for the permanent good of our grand and glorious country.

Looking at the proposition to annex Hawaii from this standpoint: having no interest, present or prospective, except that which is common to every citizen of the Republic interested in its prosperity, proud of its past, and confident of its future, I am, Mr. Speaker, convinced that duty to my people and to my country demands that I cast my vote in favor of this joint resolution for the annexation of Hawaii to the Republic of the United States of America.

When annexation is accomplished, our sailors and marines who



"go down to the sea in ships, — our soldier boys on the way to Manila, our traders and citizens who travel abroad and over the western waters will feel that there is one island amid the waves of the stormy ocean where an American ship can take refuge and be at home. When years have come and gone and other generations govern the destinies of this nation and other legislators fill our seat, all will unite to commend the work of the Fifty-fifth Congress in doing its share to make Cuba free and establish a bulwark of defense in the far Pacific.

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